

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the present amendment and remarks is respectfully requested. In the present response, claims 1-14 have been canceled, and claims 15-18 have been added. Claims 15-18 remain pending in this application.

Formal matters

The Specification has been objected to under 37 CFR 1.71. Examiner has asserted that the disclosure is "so incomprehensible as to preclude a reasonable search of the prior art by the examiner." Applicant respectfully submits that this objection is neither accurate nor supported, and should therefore be withdrawn.

Applicant notes that Examiner has pointed to a single specific example in an attempt to support Examiner's objection under 37 CFR 1.71. More particularly, Examiner has asserted that the disclosure does not provide sufficient teachings as to a corresponding structure for "a phase setting device for matching the operating frequency of the inverter." Respectfully, Examiner's assertion is incorrect. Applicant directs the Examiner's attention to page 8, lines 22-31 of the Specification and FIG. 5 of the Drawings, which provide a clear description of a specific preferred structure (i.e., elements R2, C2, and L2) for the phase setting device.

Accordingly, because the objection under 37 CFR 1.71 is not supported by Examiner's cited example, and because Examiner has offered no additional examples or indications in support thereof, this objection should be withdrawn.

Substantive matters

Claims 1-2 and 5-14 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Rudolph (U.S. Patent 5,589,740). Claims 3 and 4 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Rudolph (U.S. Patent 5,589,740) in view of Reiser (U.S. Patent 6,057,611).

In response, Applicant has canceled all pending claims 1-14 and has added new claims 15-18. In the interests of expediting prosecution of this case, rather than attempting to extensively amend certain of claims 1-14, Applicant has instead elected to present new claims 15-18. New claims 15-18 have been carefully drafted not only in order to clearly distinguish over Rudolph, Reiser, and the other references of record, but also to facilitate further examination by providing claims with enhanced clarity and no formal issues. The recitations of new claims 15-18 are fully supported by the Specification and Drawings as filed; thus, no new matter has been introduced by this amendment. With specific regard to the new claims:

(1) New claim 15 is directed to a circuit for operating a discharge lamp. The circuit includes an inverter (T1,T2) comprising at least one transistor switching unit (T2) and a current limiting device (T3,C3,D1,D2,D3) coupled to the transistor switching unit (T2). During operation, the current limiting device (T3,C3,D1,D2,D2) switches the transistor unit (T2) on and off as a function of a current flowing through the transistor unit (T2).

Rudolph appears to be directed to a circuit for controlling the preheating of lamp filaments. Reiser appears to be directed to a circuit for utilizing a freewheeling current for purposes of providing energy for switching the inverter transistors. Neither Rudolph nor Reiser is concerned with providing a current limiting device for controlling the switching of an inverter transistor in dependence on the current flowing through the inverter transistor. Furthermore, neither Rudolph nor Reiser, nor any hypothetical combination thereof, discloses a current limiting device with the connections and functionality recited in new claim 15. More

specifically, neither Rudolph nor Reiser discloses a current limiting device that is coupled to the gate of an inverter transistor and that is operable to switch the inverter transistor on and off as a function of the current flowing through the inverter transistor. Thus, new claim 15 is distinct and nonobvious over Rudolph and Reiser, as well any hypothetical combination thereof. Accordingly, new claim 15 should be deemed allowable.

(2) New claims 16-18 are dependent on claim 15, and are therefore allowable on the same basis as claim 15. Moreover, new claims 16-18 include additional recitations that render those claims further distinct and nonobvious over the references of record. For example, claim 16 recites a phase setting device that, in combination with the recitations in claim 15, is neither disclosed nor suggested by Rudolph, Reiser, or any combination thereof. Further, claim 17 recites a specific preferred structure for the current limiting device that is certainly not taught by any of the references of record. Thus, new claims 16-18 should likewise be deemed allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, passing of this case is now in order. Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's agent by telephone if such communication may be helpful in the further examination of this case. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

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